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CSS DEFENSE ACTIVITIES

Civil defense and defense mobilization activities of the U. S. Department of Agriculture are concerned with the development of plans to maintain continuity of essential departmental functions in event of attack. Additional plans are designed (1) to handle the food resources in order to assure adequate production, equitable distribution and wise use in an emergency period; (2) to protect against biological and chemical warfare and radioactive fallout in relation to crops and livestock and certain other areas; and (3) to prevent and control fires in rural areas resulting from attack.

Many of the Department's defense responsibilities parallel closely its normal peacetime functions which can be adapted to emergency use. Relating current activities to emergency operations is in keeping with the policy of the Federal Government to build into the existing framework and programs of government a readiness to carry out civil and defense mobilization functions. The specific responsibilities of Commodity Stabilization Service in line with this principle of "built in" readiness are described below.

General Coordination

Since defense responsibilities are decentralized in USDA, coordination is necessary to insure a balanced, well-integrated program. This coordination is carried out by the Food and Materials Requirements Division of CSS, which also furnishes central liaison with the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization and provides for interchange of defense information between government agencies.

Activities coordinated by FMRD include development of USDA's contribution to the National Plan for Civil Defense and Defense Mobilization with appropriate annexes to the plan; studies of the need for stockpiling of food for emergency use; analysis of requirements and supplies of food, non-food materials, facilities and manpower; preparation of standby orders; and development of damage assessment methods and techniques.

Defense planning groups have been set up throughout the USDA to develop emergency plans and assemble basic data. The FMRD coordinates the activities of these planning groups and furnishes necessary guidelines.

Planning Responsibilities

CSS personnel whose experience and skills would be useful in emergency food activities are members of many of the commodity and functional defense planning groups and are in a position to provide leadership in planning. While the members of these groups devote time to defense activities, they continue on their regular assignments. For example, planning to achieve best possible farm productivity under emergency conditions is handled mainly by CSS personnel who are responsible for current production adjustment programs.

As manpower, chemicals, machinery and equipment, containers, transportation, etc., are so important to food production, processing and distribution, a part of the defense planning within CSS centers around these non-food items. Appropriate defense planning groups have been set up in the area of non-food requisites and work cooperatively with food planning groups in the development of preparedness measures.

Regional Liaison

The FMRD also supervises the activities of USDA's eight Regional Liaison Representatives (RLRs) who have been appointed to provide pre-emergency planning

at the regional level and to furnish liaison with OCDM regional offices. The RLRs are responsible for developing plans for emergency regional food programs and for coordinating and expediting the development of USDA defense plans at the State level. Under attack conditions the RLR would receive direction from the USDA national office if communications were not cut off; should communications be cut off he would receive guidance from the OCDM regional director on national defense policy.

Commodity Credit Corporation Stocks

Since Commodity Credit Corporation stocks would contribute significantly to the Nation's emergency food supply, policy concerning location and distribution of these stocks has been adopted. Wherever possible, stocks are located at sites far enough away from target areas to be relatively safe and yet accessible in event of attack, keeping transportation problems in mind. Progress under this policy is reported annually, and the vulnerability of locations is analyzed periodically. CCC-owned stocks are considered national stocks and must be used in the best interests of the Nation as a whole. Should communications with national headquarters be disrupted during an emergency, authority has been delegated to CSS commodity office directors to determine the disposition of CCC-owned stocks.

Local Defense Plans

While the Department's emergency field organization has not been fully developed, CSS representatives in the field would play an important part in the post-attack food operations at the State and local levels. In the immediate post-attack period, field activities would be particularly vital.

Should an attack occur, the individual family should be prepared to feed itself and remain in the family fallout shelter for the initial 2-week period following attack. After the home-stored food supply was exhausted, assistance

would be obtained through remaining retail outlets as soon as it was safe to be out in the open. Locally administered rationing and mass feeding programs would also be of assistance.

If local food supplies diminished, steps would be taken by the local USDA office to obtain additional food. Even if communications were cut off, the local USDA office would have authority to take action to insure best utilization of commercial supplies and locally stored CCC stocks. If communications permitted and if food supplies from these sources were inadequate, the local USDA office would request assistance from the USDA State office, which would obtain assistance from USDA at the national level if needed.

USDA would make every effort to provide adequate food to local governments. In carrying out its Federal food responsibilities, USDA ordinarily would not withhold or divert from a community food which it needed to meet approved dietary levels. A possible exception would be providing food needed for the military. A primary aim of the Federal government would be to see that all people in all areas were fed as adequately as circumstances permitted.

Whenever help could not be obtained through Federal resource channels, USDA would look to State and local governments for assistance in obtaining essential supporting items and manpower in the immediate post-attack period.

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Additional steps to insure adequate preparation to carry out USDA defense plans will include training of personnel and further testing of plans; completion of USDA's emergency field organization and appropriate delegations of authority; carrying out an educational program at regional, State, and local levels; and development of defense plans at the State and local levels.

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